

REMARKS

The foregoing amendments are submitted under 37 CFR 1.116 in response to the final rejection of claims 17-20 on new grounds under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as stated on pages 3-11 of the Final Office action. The proposed amendments to such finally rejected claims are exclusively related to the Examiner's interpretation of the claims as not meaning that steps a) through d) are performed in sequence because no sequential order is specified, as stated on page 3 of the Final Office action. Accordingly, pursuant to the suggestion implied in the Examiner's latter referred to statement claims 17-20 as amended specify: "the improvement residing in performance in sequential order the following steps of: a)--;b)--; e)--; and d)---". Entry of such proposed amendments to the claims is therefore in order and expected.

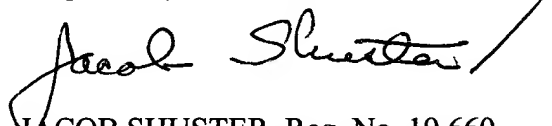
Claims 17-20 especially as amended clearly distinguish over the disclosures in the Day et al. and Licht patents relied on to finally reject the claims as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). The inadequacies of such prior art references is hereinafter explained in detail.

According to the interpretation of the disclosure in the Day et al. patent as indicated in the Final Office action, such prior art reference discloses a panel 30 having exterior skins 37 characterized as a barrier formed during a first step a) of a fabrication process followed by a second step b) involving infusion of a fire resistant resin into the barrier. In support of such interpretation of the disclosure in the Day et al. patent, paragraph 0057 on page 6 therein is referred to because it indicates "infusion--(into)--the exterior skin of panel (30)--impregnated with fire resistant--resin". The latter quoted reference to fire resistant resin infusion in the Day et al. patent does not however indicate when resin infusion is performed. Paragraph 0058 in the Day et al. patent indicates that such resin infusion is performed after formation of the barrier panel 30 with outer skins 37 attached by bonding to the inner substrate skins 36 of the panel 30, by placement within a closed vacuum evacuated mold into which the resin is infused.

Accordingly, the disclosure in the Day et al. patent clearly negates the limitations of claims 17-20 which call for "b) introducing a fire resisting agent into the barrier after said forming thereof", preceding the sequentially performed steps c) and d). As to the Licht patent, it is relied on only in regard to claim 18 without any reference to or relationship to the latter referred to inadequacy of the disclosure in the Day et al. patent relied on as the primary prior art reference.

In view of the foregoing, entry of the proposed amendments to claims 17-20 and an allowance thereof is in order and expected in advance of the July 9, 2003 deadline for appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jacob Shuster", followed by a diagonal slash mark.

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